

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-3 are amended. Claims 4-8 are added. No new matter is added. Claims 1-8 are pending and under consideration.

OBJECTIONS TO DRAWINGS

On page 2 of the Office Actions, the drawings are objected to. In order to overcome these objections, replacement figures are submitted herewith. Replacement FIGS. 5 and 6 submitted herewith are labeled as "PRIOR ART" according to the Examiner's suggestion. Approval of these changes to the Drawings is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,674,737 to Murayoshi (hereinafter "Murayoshi").

Claims 1-3 are amended herewith to enhance their form according to the U.S. patent claim practice. No new features are added.

Independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Murayoshi at least by reciting

pad pressing means, applying pressure to the separation pad so as to press the separation pad against a surface of the pick roller, **the pad pressing means having a reverse U-shape** to press the separation pad against the surface of the pick roller at two portions, a front portion and a rear portion, along a rotating direction of the pick roller thereof, **and the pad pressing means being configured to be rotatable back and forth with respect to the rotating direction of the pick roller about a fulcrum where pressure is applied to the pad pressing means** (emphasis ours for the features not disclosed by the cited prior art, as discussed below).

Murayoshi discloses an automatic sheet feeding device including a sheet tray, a separation roller in contact with a lowermost sheet of the stack of sheets, a separation member including a free end portion maintained in contact with the separation roller, and a sheet pressing member pressing the sheets against the separation roller in a position upstream from where the separation member is in contact with the separation roller. (See Murayoshi's Abstract). In rejecting the claims, the Office Action uses (or paraphrases) the language of claim 1 and attaches references from Murayoshi. FIG. 12 (which is reproduced on page 4 of the Office Action) of Murayoshi represents an automatic feeding device "characterized in that the pressing means for forcing the separation member 13 against the separation roller 12 and the regulating member for preventing the pressing means to move a distance greater than is

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached drawings include changes to FIGS. 5 and 6, respectively. FIGS. 5 and 6 are labeled as "PRIOR ART" as suggested in the Office Action. No new matter is added.

necessary in a direction in which it moves away from the separation roller 12 are formed to have a compact size" (see col. 17, line 65 to col. 18, line 2 of Murayoshi). Murayoshi's automatic sheet feeding device includes a pressing plate 14 which presses on the separation member 13. The pressure is applied by a pressing rod 559 which is adjusted via a bracket 550 to transmit the force generated by the pressing spring 566. The pressing plate 14 of Murayoshi does not have a reverse U-shape as the pad pressing means recited in claim 1.

Further, Murayoshi includes no teaching or suggestion that its pressing plate 14 can be rotated around the fulcrum 552.

The pad pressing means of claim 1 by having a reverse U-shape and being configured to be rotatable back and forth with respect to the rotating direction of the pick roller about a fulcrum where pressure is applied to the pad pressing means, has the advantage that "the pressure applied to the separation pad can be made into uniform pressure" at the front and rear portions, thereby ensuring stability to the separation processing of the paper (see paragraphs [0025]-[0028] of page 7 of the specification).

Since Murayoshi fails to teach or suggest every feature recited in claim 1, claim 1 and claims 2-5 depending from claim 1 are patentably distinct over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse, and request reconsideration of the rejection based on Murayoshi.¹

NEW CLAIMS

New claim 4 recites same features as claim 3, but depends from claim 2 while claim 3 as amended depends only from claim 1.

New claims 5, 6 and 7 recite additional features of the automatic paper feeder of claim 1 or 2. The new claims are fully supported by the originally filed specification, for example, FIG. 2 and the corresponding description relative to claims 5 and 6, and, the pressing spring 4 illustrated in FIGS. 1-4 and described in the specification's portions related to these figures, relative to claim 7.

New independent claim 8 is directed to a method of adjusting pad pressing means pressing on a pick roller of an automatic paper feeder, the pad pressing means pressing the pick roller in at least two distinct portions (see the device of claim 1). Claim 8 patentably distinguishes

¹ See MPEP 2131: "A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference," (Citations omitted) (emphasis added). See also MPEP 2143.03: "All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art."

over the prior art by reciting: (1) rotating the pad pressing means about a fulcrum where pressure is applied to the pad pressing means to adjust pressure on the at least two distinct portions, and (2) adjusting position of the fulcrum closer or farther from the pick roller. The claim is supported by the originally filed specification, for example, paragraphs [0025]-[0032] on pages 7-8.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

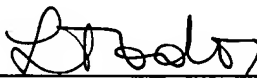
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: June 19, 2008

By: 
Luminita Todor, PhD
Registration No. 57,639

1201 New York Avenue, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501